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DEFENSE HUMAN RESOURCES ACTIVITY
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MEMORANDUM FOR: SEE DISTRIBUTION

10 Feb 2021

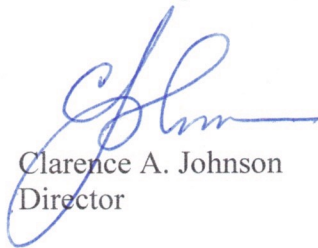
SUBJECT: 2021 National African American History Month

The Department of Defense joins the nation in celebrating National African American/Black History Month from February 1 – 28, 2021. First initiated as “Negro History Week” by historian Carter G. Woodson in 1926, National African American/Black History Month was officially recognized by the United States government in 1976. It is during this month that we celebrate and honor the accomplishments and achievements of the African Americans who have served and continue to serve this nation.

The theme for 2021 is “The Black Family: Representation, Identity, and Diversity.” Throughout the history of our nation, the Black Family has faced many hardships and economic and equality challenges, but it remains strong, resourceful, and resolved to improve quality of life in the home, community, state, and country. This strength and courage inspired leaders like Harriett Tubman, Frederick Douglass, Sojourner Truth, and thousands of former slaves who enlisted in the Union Army to fight for their freedom.

The African proverb, “it takes a village,” holds true to the spirit of the culture of the Black Family. It is the village that served as the source of strength and encouragement for great pioneers like the first African Americans to travel in space, Dr. Mae Jemison and Dr. Guion S. Bluford, Jr.; General Colin Powell, the first African American to serve as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and the Tuskegee Airmen pilots, who fought in World War II. These examples paved the path for the first African American Secretary of Defense, Army General retired Lloyd J. Austin, III; Captain Remoshay Nelson, who serves as the Air Force’s first African American Thunderbird Pilot; and Lieutenant Junior Grade Madeline Swegle, the Navy’s first Black female strike aviator. The Black Family is filled with diverse traditions passed on from generation to generation, which has led to the successes and achievements of military and civilian leaders who represent the African American community.

As we reflect on the role of the Black Family in our nation’s history, let us remember and honor how they stood by our African American military and civilian community to fight for freedom and equality for all. For more information on National African American/Black History Month, please visit <https://www.deomi.org/human-relations/special-observances.cfm>.


Clarence A. Johnson
Director

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